

Yeshua Messiah: Incarnated or Created?

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(Jesus Christ: Incarnated or Created?)

edited by

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Notes on Editing

The main function of my editing process is to honor the Set-apart Name. In keeping with an established practice, I use the Tetragrammaton YHWH for the Name of the Father, or use Elohim which means "Almighty." The formal name for the Messiah is Yahushua, but I also use the more familiar, Yeshua. I believe both are correct. As for the actual pronunciation of the the Tetragrammaton, I believe that the Father's Name should be pronounced as Yahuah or perhaps Yahuwah. I encourage my readers to actually pronounce YHWH as Yahuah in their reading. A secondary editing function is avoid the many words that have crept into the language of worship, but are false or misleading in their meaning.

Yeshua Messiah: Incarnated or Created?

We now will examine the historical background of the development of what has become the cornerstone of Christian orthodoxy, the doctrine of the “Incarnation.” We will see that this doctrine arose neither in a vacuum, nor strictly from the text of Scripture. It was the result of the influence of certain beliefs and attitudes that prevailed in and around the Christian church after the first century. Pagan mythology, Gnostic views of redemption and human pre-existence, and the misunderstanding of Johannine language all contributed to the teaching that YHWH Himself became a man, which is the essence of “Incarnational theology.”

Although the “Incarnation” is assumed to be a basic tenet of Christianity, the term is used nowhere in Scripture. This is even admitted by Trinitarian scholars: “Incarnation, in its full and proper sense, is not something directly presented in Scripture.” The doctrine of the Incarnation was actually formulated during the next several centuries. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* verifies this fact:

The doctrine, which took classical shape under the influence of the controversies of the 4th-5th centuries, was formally defined at the Council of Chalcedon of 451. It was largely molded by the diversity of tradition in the schools of Antioch and Alexandria... further refinements were added in the later Patristic and Medieval periods.

The reason the councils and synods took hundreds of years to develop the doctrine of Incarnation is that it is not stated in Scripture, and the verses used to support it can be explained without resorting to a doctrine that bears more similarity to pagan mythology than scriptural truth. Teaching the Jews that Elohim came down in the form of a man would have completely offended those living at the time of the Messiah and his followers, and greatly contradicted their understanding of the Messianic scriptures. As we saw in Chapter 9, this doctrine is derived most prominently from the Good News of John, and in particular from the phrase in John 1:14 (KJV): “and the Word was made flesh.” But was “the word” synonymous with “the Messiah” in Jewish understanding? Hardly. The Jews would have understood it to mean “plan” or “purpose,” that which was clearly and specifically declared in Genesis 3:15—a “seed” of a woman who would destroy the works of the Devil. This plan of YHWH for the salvation of man finally “became flesh” in Yeshua Messiah. This verse is not establishing a doctrine of Incarnation contrary to all prophetic expectations, nor a teaching of pre-existence. It is a teaching of YHWH’s great love in bringing into existence His plan to save mankind from their sin.

Before proceeding, we must define what is traditionally understood by the “incarnation” of the Messiah. Keep in mind that we strongly affirm the reality and necessity of the virgin birth of the Messiah as the only way he could have been born without the inherent sin of mankind that would have disqualified him from becoming the Lamb of Elohim. But the traditional “formula which enshrines the Incarnation... is that in some sense Elohim, without ceasing to be Elohim, was made man.”

[The Editor strongly asserts that Yeshua was NOT virgin born, and that we do NOT inherit a sinful nature. If we are prepared to abandon the false doctrine of incarnation, then other false doctrines must also fall by the wayside.]

We will quote the *New Bible Dictionary*, a Trinitarian source, for a working definition and explanation of this doctrine:

It appears to mean that the divine Maker became one of His own creatures, which is a *prima facie* contradiction in theological terms

When the Word “became flesh,” His deity was not abandoned or reduced or contracted, nor did He cease to exercise the divine functions which had been His before...The Incarnation of the Son of God, then, was not a diminishing of deity, but an acquiring of manhood.

One wonders how a pre-existent “God the Son” can become a man without any “diminishing of deity,” or that he could live a “fully human” life without ceasing to exercise the divine functions he had been exercising since eternity began. Trinitarians say this is part of the “mystery” of the Incarnation. The *New Bible Dictionary* admits that the concept is not developed or discussed in the Scriptures:

The only sense in which the New Testament writers ever attempt to explain the incarnation is by showing how it fits into God’s overall plan for redeeming mankind...This evangelical interest throws light on the otherwise puzzling fact that the New Testament nowhere reflects on the virgin birth of Jesus as witnessing to the conjunction of deity and manhood in His person—a line of thought much canvassed by later theology.

If the deity of Jesus was not at first clearly stated in words (and Acts gives no hint that it was), it was nevertheless part of the faith by which the first Christians lived and prayed...The theological formulation of belief in the Incarnation came later, but the belief itself, however incoherently expressed, was there in the Church from the beginning.

We disagree with the assertion that the doctrine of the Incarnation was “in the Church from the beginning.” Since the doctrine is clearly not in Scripture, how can it possibly be considered a part of “the Apostles’ doctrine”? Because scholars admit that this doctrine is biblically tenuous, we must examine why Christian theologians of the third century and later became so preoccupied with establishing it as the cornerstone of a Trinitarian Christian faith. In doing so, we will see some of the changing assumptions and beliefs that led to the development of this doctrine. We must first establish the fact that the very process of turning from historical truth to mythology was clearly prophesied by Shaul-Paul at the end of his life. This is amazing but not surprising, in light of the many times in Scripture that Elohim has warned His people about being influenced by pagan culture.

Turning from Truth to Fables

“Incarnation,” at least in the most common Christian conception, is the belief that Yeshua is not a created being, but the invisible Elohim “clothed” in human flesh. To

quote a recent book on the identity of Yeshua by a popular author, Yeshua “thought of Himself as God in human flesh.” Thus, in our view, the scriptural account of the creation of the Last Adam is exchanged for a myth. The concept of YHWH, or any spirit being, *becoming a baby* is completely inconsistent with scriptural truth.

We recognize that the doctrine of the Incarnation is not the *direct* result of the incursion of pagan mythology, as if some Church leaders of the second century made up a story they knew would sound like mythology. We do think, however, that Church leaders of the third and fourth centuries after the Messiah were not diligent to allow the whole of Scripture to determine Christian doctrine. In the absence of a complete commitment to the Scriptures as a whole, they misconstrued the language of the Good News of John and used it to establish a doctrine that does not harmonize with prophecy, the Synoptic Good News and the rest of the post Messiah scriptures. The result has been to shift the center of the Christian message from the historically documented resurrection to the Incarnation, a very mystical, mythological and mysterious idea. As Maurice Wiles admits, “The Church has always recognized the highly mysterious nature of incarnational belief.” - We would argue that this doctrine has done more to weaken the foundation of the rational core of the Christian faith than have all the assaults of so-called “heretics” put together.

[The story of the virgin birth is also “the direct result of the incursion of pagan mythology.” It occurs in only two places, one in Matthew and the other in Luke, as an addition. The earliest New Testament manuscripts do not include the virgin birth stories.]

The idea that YHWH Himself came and lived among us in the form of a man echoes pagan mythology, and at the very least has left the Christian message open to unnecessary ridicule. A pre-existent divine being taking on human flesh and being raised by regular human parents sounds so mythological that it has often been derided by critics, especially Jews and Muslims. This is even admitted by our Trinitarian source:

Such an assertion, considered abstractly against the background of Old Testament monotheism, might seem blasphemous or nonsensical - as indeed, orthodox Judaism has always held it to be.

Robinson discusses the mythological character of the traditional and popular understanding of the Incarnation, or “the Christmas story”:

Traditional Christology has worked with a frankly supra naturalist scheme. Popular religion has expressed this mythologically, professional theology metaphysically. For this way of thinking, the Incarnation means that God the Son came down to earth, and was born, lived and died within this world as a man. From “out there” there graciously entered into the human scene one who was not “of it” and yet who lived genuinely and completely within it. As the God-man, he united in his person the supernatural and the natural: and the problem of Christology is how Jesus can be fully God and fully man, and yet genuinely one person.

The traditional supra naturalistic way of describing the Incarnation almost inevitably suggests that Yeshua was really YHWH Almighty walking about on earth, dressed up as a man. Yeshua was not a man born and bred - he was YHWH for a limited period taking part in a charade. He looked like a man, he talked like a man, he felt like a man, but underneath he was YHWH

dressed up - like Father Christmas... Indeed, the very word "incarnation" (which, of course is not a Scriptural term) almost inevitably suggests it. It conjures up the idea of the Spirit substance being plunged in flesh and coated with it like chocolate or silver plating... The supra naturalist view of the Incarnation can never really rid itself of the idea of the prince who appears in the guise of a beggar. However genuinely destitute the beggar may be, he is a prince; and that in the end is what matters.

Some in the "History of Religions school" have even suggested that the doctrine of the Incarnation was derived from Gnostic redeemer myths. Though the specific Gnostic redeemer myth is now thought to have been developed after the theory of "God became a man" was already established, the mythological character of the doctrine of the Incarnation is evidently derivative and influenced by pagan god-man beliefs of the first few centuries after the Messiah. The doctrine sounds so similar to many other myths concerning divine beings who came and lived among men that it is hard not to conclude that Christian thinkers employed the language of pagan religions instead of adhering diligently to biblical language (scripture).

The idea that YHWH or the gods could come down in the form of men was a common view in the Messiah's time. We see a very clear example of this in the book of Acts, following the healing of a crippled man:

Acts 14:11-13

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. It is worthy of note that Paul and Barnabas did not take this opportunity to explain that it was not *they* who were gods come in human form, but Yeshua (who was supposedly "God made man"). Instead, they argued against the mythological basis of such pagan beliefs and practices:

Acts 14:14 and 15

But when the messengers Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living Elohim, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."

As this section of Scripture implies, most people influenced by Greek and Roman religion and culture believed in a variety of myths involving the intermingling of gods, men, women, and even animals. For example, the Romans believed that Romulus and Remus were twins born of a mortal mother and Mars, the war god. The story was told that they were set afloat in a basket on the Tiber River. A she-wolf found the babies and raised them. A shepherd found the twins and brought them up to adulthood. The twins decided to build a city at the spot where the wolf found them, but Romulus killed Remus and founded Rome, supposedly in 753 BC.

[The myths of gods becoming men were extremely common in ancient history. More often than not many such incarnation myths included virgin births.]

The Roman mythological pantheon included a triad, meaning a group of three gods, composed of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. Jupiter was the god of the heavens and Mars the god of war, while Quirinus represented the common people (the Greeks had no similar god). By the late 500's BC, the Romans replaced the archaic triad with another triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Juno was associated with Hera [the wife of Zeus], and Minerva with Athena, who sprang fully grown from Zeus' head.

The chief god in the Greek pantheon, Zeus, visited the human woman Danae in the form of golden rain and fathered Perseus, a "god-man." Hercules (Herakles) was the son of Zeus, who fooled Alcmena by impersonating her husband, the general Amphitryon. In his descent into the realms of death, Hercules had become the Saviour of his people.

Another pagan myth particularly closely akin to the idea of the Incarnation is that of Dionysus. A. N. Wilson cites this myth as an example of what he believes is Christian mythologizing by the "apostle" Shaul-Paul:

Dionysus discards his divine nature and walks in the human world disguised... Dionysus, the god disguised in human form, tells him that his efforts to resist the new movement will be completely worthless; he is not contending against flesh and blood, but against a god. "You are mortal, he is a god. If I were you, I would control my rage and sacrifice to him, rather than kick against the pricks" [From Euripides, *The Bacchae*].

Critics of Christianity like Wilson have a field day with the likeness of the Incarnation to these pagan mythologies, and scoff at the notion that Yeshua is "God" made manifest. There are enough things that the critics will find objectionable in the genuine Christian message. Why distort Scripture and thus give them legitimate ammunition?

It seems that believing myths is endemic to the human race. One of the advantages of myths, legends and stories compared to historical truth is that the former can be changed at any time and few will mind as long as it makes a better story. Because myths frequently form the core of a people's identity and their sense of value in the cosmos, they are prone to believe stories that elevate their own status by the intermingling of the divine with their own history.

[John D. Keyser has written a comprehensive paper on virgin birth mythologies. It is entitled, "The Ancient Beginnings of the Virgin Birth Myth," and can be found at Hope of Israel Ministries.]

Mythology was an integral part of the life of the average person in the first century, and many rulers tried to associate their own birth with a god. Because of this mythological backdrop of the pagan religions of his day, the Messenger Shaul went to great lengths to communicate the historical and scriptural basis for belief in the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection according to prophecies spoken generations before. Instead of

myths invented by man and bereft of the possibility of authentication, Shaul and the believers of the early Church declared their faith in a Messiah who was a vivid and specifically *prophesied* historical figure. Only the true Elohim could both declare His intentions well in advance and then perform them perfectly in a way that could be verified by eye-witnesses and later students of the Scriptures.

No one was ever an eye-witness to the fables of mythology, which were kept alive by the naïve credulity of devotees of pagan religions. Nor was the coming of any mythological figure accurately prophesied centuries before in a coherent body of prophetic literature. The Christian faith, therefore, stands alone among all the world's belief systems, which, with the exception of Judaism, are based on unverifiable mythologies. Even the secular "religion" of Evolutionism is based upon a grandiose myth - that the minutely ordered cosmos arose spontaneously by chance from chaos, gradually increased in complexity by a series of small, random mutations, and eventually produced the minds of Charles Darwin and Carl Sagan, who were "smart" enough to conceive of and rationalize such a preposterous fable. In contrast, Christians are expected to ground their faith on a rational, scriptural and historically verifiable foundation, so that their testimony cannot be discredited by later discoveries.

[Amen! says the Editor.]

J. A. T. Robinson articulately sums up the sense in which Yeshua embodies or "incarnates" the Almighty, not as a mythological figure, but as the one whom YHWH sent to perfectly represent Him and do His will:

Jesus is a man who incarnates in everything he is and does the *Logos* who is God. He is the Son, the mirror-image of God, who is God for man and in man. The "I" of Jesus speaks God, acts God. He utters the things of God, he does the works of God. He is his plenipotentiary, totally commissioned to represent him - as a human being. He speaks and acts with the "I" that is one with God, utterly identified and yet not identical, his representative but not his replacement - and certainly not his replica, as if he were God dressed up as a human being. He is not a divine being who came to earth, in the manner of Ovid's metamorphoses, in the form of a man, but the uniquely normal human being in whom the *logos* or self-expressive activity of God was totally embodied.

Jesus makes no claims for himself in his own right, and at the same time makes the most tremendous claims about what God is doing through him and uniquely through him. **Jesus never claims to be God personally; yet he always claims to bring God completely.**

A strong argument against the idea that Elohim became man in order to redeem us is that there is not a single prophecy that supports the idea. Nowhere in the body of prophetic literature does it say that YHWH ever intended to make Himself into a man in order to redeem mankind. All the prophecies foretold of a *human being* who would be uniquely qualified and empowered to rule and reign and establish righteousness in the earth. For this reason, Satan was continually attempting to destroy the Messiah line whenever he was able to determine its course. When Abraham was singled out, Satan escalated the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. When Jacob was identified as the

one through whom the Messiah would come, he and his children became the object of Satanic attack.

This was the consistent story throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, and it is clearly seen in the Messianic Scriptures also. As soon as Herod knew that the baby had been born, Satan inspired him to have the child killed. Would Satan have been so determined to destroy the child if he had known that it was *Elohim Himself* who had made Himself into a baby? Did he think that by killing the baby he could destroy *Elohim*? The fact is, such a notion is completely foreign to the prophetic literature, which is radically trivialized by the idea that YHWH meant all along that He would come Himself. Never do we read that a voice thundered down from Mt. Sinai or anywhere else: “Don’t make me come down there!”

It is true that the Messianic hope was at its root an anticipation of a human being that could completely represent YHWH on earth. That is why the prophecy so clearly spoke “the spirit of YHWH will rest on him” (Isa. 11:2). This human being would certainly have some divine attributes in order to carry out his job, but it is going too far to say, as the New Bible Dictionary does, that:

The ascription by the Old Testament of various titles, functions and relationships to the Godhead, served to prepare the Jewish mind for the Christian doctrine of a triune Deity, which is necessarily connected with that of the Incarnation.

The fact is, *nothing* prepared the Jewish mind for the idea of a triune godhead, as is evidenced by the millions of monotheistic Jews who still think the idea is nonsensical.

Can Only YHWH Save?

As the subtle influence of Gnostic doctrine infiltrated the Church, early Church leaders and teachers began to accept the idea that for the Messiah to have been the Redeemer, it was necessary for him to transcend creation, that is, be an uncreated being, part of an eternal godhead. Their reasoning was that creation could not be redeemed by a creature, but only by YHWH Himself. We will now seek to prove that neither of these assumptions is supported by biblical evidence, and that each has led to an unscriptural conclusion that Yeshua Messiah is YHWH “incarnate.” We will further show that this reasoning still prevails in the Christian Church today despite the biblical evidence to the contrary.

We must consider this assumption that the Messiah had to be “uncreated,” “eternal” and “fully Elohim” in light of what will be handled in depth in the next chapter (this article is chapter 17 of our book *One God & One Lord*) on the rejection of Scripture and logic by the early Church fathers and the Nicene Council. It is our considered opinion that this idea was not derived from the Scriptures, but was introduced under the influence on the Church of the belief in a transcendent Elohim who was completely detached from the process of creation. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, one of the main

earmarks of Gnostic thought was that YHWH was not the Creator of this present creation, which was evil, but that this present cosmos was the work of a lesser, evil deity called a “demiurge.” This concept was complete speculation and mythology, but it had an influence on the direction of the Church’s teaching. The acceptance of myths into the core of the Christian Message sowed the seeds of a disastrous diminishment of the power of the Good News message. Indeed, the *historical* validity of Yeshua of Nazareth being the promised Messiah is the very core of the Good News and a necessary element for salvation, because we must have faith in our heart that Elohim has *in actual fact* raised him from the dead. That is, we are asked to believe in the validity of an historical event, because that event, like no other, demonstrated and proved that Yeshua of Nazareth was who he said he was: the Son of the living Elohim, the Messiah the Master.

Romans 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth, “Yeshua is Master,” **and believe in your heart that Elohim raised him from the dead**, you will be saved.

Obviously, we are not expected to just “have faith” in the resurrection without evidence, as if we were children believing in the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy. We see from Acts 1:3 that the Messiah provided the disciples with many convincing proofs of his resurrection:

Acts 1:3

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of Elohim.

This issue of the historical validity of the Good News, especially the resurrection, is forcefully advanced in the Messianic Scriptures as a part of “the Apostles’ doctrine.” The “apostle” Shaul argues in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 that unless Yeshua was *truly* raised from the dead, our faith and preaching are vain (useless and worthless), and we are still in our sins. Any doctrine that compromises this historical bedrock of the Christian faith ought to be held in the profoundest suspicion. The resurrection of the Messiah is the lynchpin of the Good News, and the affirmation of his Sonship and Messiahship. It is the fact of the resurrection as the proof of the Messiahship of one Yeshua of Nazareth that the early Church propounded. This is the historical truth upon which the Good News is built.

However, even today it is common to hear respected teachers and commentators say that the essence of the Good News is that “God became a man and died for our sins.” One modern defender of incarnational theology argues that if one does not believe that Yeshua is YHWH incarnate, that person will die in his sins. The verse he uses to substantiate this position is found in the Good News of John. We will quote the verse exactly as it appears in his newsletter with his inserted bracket:

John 8:24b (KJV)

...or if ye believe not that I am he [God], ye shall die in your sins.

We strongly disagree with this interpretation, and assert that the real meaning of the verse is clear in light of the stated purpose of the Good News of John: to prove that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of the living Elohim (20:31; cp. Matt. 16:16). In other words, if one chooses to not believe in the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua Messiah as the Redeemer to mankind, he will die in his sins. To go beyond this simple and easily understandable verse and assert, as orthodox Christianity has, that one must believe that Yeshua is YHWH incarnate or he will die in his sins, is, in our view, completely reprehensible. If only one person were discouraged from accepting the Messiah's sacrifice on his behalf because of this teaching, that would be too many. But, no doubt, some people have thought they were lost in their sins simply because they could not believe in the Trinitarian view that "God became a man."

The aforementioned apologist for orthodoxy makes the further comment about the necessity for the Redeemer to be YHWH Himself. His reasoning is essentially the same as the thinking of the Christians under the influence of Gnosticism in the centuries after the Messiah:

Throughout the Old Testament, God says that He is the only Savior. Obviously this must be true because salvation is an infinite work, including as it must the full payment of the infinite penalty for sin required by God's infinite justice - something **which only God could accomplish**. Consequently, for Jesus to be our Savior, He must be God. Paul called him "God our Savior" (1 Tim. 1:1, 2:3; Titus 1:3 and 4; 2:10 and 13; 3:4) as did Peter (2 Peter 1:1) and Jude (v. 25)...Thus, **God** in His infinite love and grace **became a man** through the virgin birth so that He, as a man, could take the judgment we deserved and make it possible for us to be forgiven.

The logic of this argument begins with the premise that only YHWH can save. Beside the influence of pagan thought, this idea comes from the fact that YHWH is called "Savior" in Scripture. For example:

Isaiah 43:11

I, even I, am YHWH, and apart from me there is no savior.

Because the above verse seems to say that YHWH is the only Savior, the argument is that Yeshua has to be YHWH in order to save us, and if he is not YHWH, then he did not save us, and we will die in our sins. But this is a fallacious argument because it fails on several counts. First, it fails to recognize the distinction between YHWH as the Author of salvation and the Messiah as the Agent. YHWH, the Messiah and others are all referred to as "savior," but that clearly does not make them identical. The term "savior" is used of many people in the Scriptures. This is hard to see in the English versions because, when it is used of men, the translators almost always translated it as "deliverer." For example:

Nehemiah 9:27

So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion **you gave them deliverers** ["saviors"], who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

This in and of itself shows that modern translators have a Trinitarian bias that was not in the original languages. The only reason to translate the same word as "Savior" when it applies to Elohim or the Messiah, but as "deliverer" when it applies to men, is to make the term seem unique to YHWH and Yeshua when in fact it is not. This is a good example of how the actual meaning of Scripture can be obscured if the translators are not careful or if they are theologically biased.

YHWH's gracious provision of "saviors" is not recognized when the same word is translated "savior" for Elohim and Messiah but "deliverer" for others. Also lost is the testimony in Scripture that YHWH works through *people* to bring His power to bear. Of course, the fact that there are other "saviors" does not take away from Yeshua Messiah who is the only one who could and did save us from our sins and eternal death.

Second, the term "savior" must be understood in relationship to what people were being "saved" from. The "saving" that Elohim did prior to His Son's coming was rescuing His people from their various bondages and captivities, not the *ultimate* salvation of saving His people from their sins. That job had to wait until the birth of the man who was the Lamb of (from) Elohim, not the YHWH who became a Lamb.

The third problem with this argument is that it fails to take into account a common idiom employed in prophetic utterances, namely that actions are often attributed directly to YHWH when in fact they will be carried out by His agents. Matthew 1:21(NRSV) says that the name "Jesus" or *Yeshua* means "*Yahweh* saves," and proceeds to give a prophetic utterance based on the name: "for he will save his people from their sins." His name means "*Yahweh* saves," and yet it says that "he [Yeshua] will save." This kind of language has a rich biblical background that must be understood clearly to avoid confusion.

Yeshua (Yahushua) is the same name as the "Joshua" who came after Moses. By studying the relevant scriptural records, we learn that *Yahweh* did not "save" Israel by doing the job Himself, or by becoming Joshua. Joshua "saved" Israel by obeying YHWH and leading the children of Israel out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land. The salvation was wrought by YHWH empowering both Joshua and the people who went forth in faith to claim the victory that YHWH guaranteed for them if they would go get it. Yet leading up to this victorious accomplishment of Joshua's were several prophetic utterances spoken by YHWH Himself, strongly stating that *He* would do the job. For example:

Exodus 23:23, 27, and 28

My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. **I will send** my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. **I will make** all your enemies turn their backs and run **I will** send the hornet ahead of you to **drive** the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way.

It seems very clear in verse 23 that YHWH said that He Himself would do the delivering. But, in this same context a few verses later, He says that *the Israelites* will drive His enemies out:

Exodus 23:31

I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and **you will drive them out before you.**

What is going on? Is YHWH the “savior” here or not? The fact is, this is typical of prophetic language. The principle we see over and over in Scripture is this: *Elohim* says that “He will do” something that in fact He will empower His servants to do with *His help*. More specifically, when *Elohim* says that He will do something, He means that He will *send* someone with whom He will work to bring His will to pass. In the above case, it was Joshua, but also Moses, Gideon, the other judges, David and many others were the active agents of the salvation that YHWH “wrought.” In the case of sending someone to die for our sins, He sent Yeshua, the namesake of Joshua. Only rarely in Scripture does *Elohim* act sovereignly (*i.e.*, without a human agent), and in the case of Yeshua, He did not take matters into His own hands, but entrusted His will into the loving and obedient hands of His beloved Son. *Elohim*, as His manner has always been, sent the perfect person into the battle and worked with him until the job was done. So in a very real sense, both YHWH *and* Yeshua “saved” us, as the heroes of old saved Israel, and therefore it is appropriate that each should be called “savior.”

We agree that Man, in his fallen condition, could never produce a qualified candidate for the job of Messiah, nor initiate anything resulting in the redemption of mankind. Because sin is inherent in mankind, and because the wages of sin is death, the death of a sacrifice was required to atone for it (Heb. 9:22). Animal blood, though provisionally adequate before the Messiah by the grace of *Elohim*, failed to satisfactorily meet the requirements of a complete atonement. *Elohim*, being spirit, has no blood; furthermore, *Elohim*, who is immortal and eternal, cannot die. Therefore the only solution was that *a man with perfect blood* (that is, a sinless man) *had to die*. But because all men have been tainted by sin, there would be no possibility for a sinless human to exist without some kind of direct, divine intervention. However, we must reject the proposition that the *only way* YHWH could satisfy the requirements of redemption was by becoming a man Himself.

[Dear reader, I cannot let this “atonement” doctrine go by without a comment. Yeshua never claimed that he came to be a sacrifice for sin, or that his blood was a requirement of forgiveness. Our heavenly Father can forgive our sins whenever we ask Him in true

repentance. Moreover, YHWH made it quite clear that those who sacrifice their sons and daughters are an abomination to Him. Surely, the Almighty Father cannot contradict Himself. Editor]

Contrary to the assumption that the Messiah must be Elohim for redemption to be accomplished, we find, upon closer scrutiny, that the *opposite* must be the case - that unless he was a *man*, Yeshua could not have redeemed mankind. YHWH's "infinite" (we prefer a less mathematical and more biblical term like "immortal") nature actually precluded Him from being our redeemer, *because Elohim cannot die*. He therefore sent a man equipped for the task, one who could die for our sins and then be raised from the dead to vanquish death forever. This is the clear testimony of Scripture.

[A blood sacrifice was not required for Yeshua to be our redeemer. Editor.]

Romans 5:15

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one **man** [Adam], how much more did Elohim's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one **man**, Yeshua Messiah, overflow to the many!

If it were a major tenet of Christianity that redemption had to be accomplished by YHWH Himself, then this section of Romans would have been the perfect place to say it. But just when Scripture could settle the argument once and for all, it says that redemption had to be accomplished by a *man*. The theological imaginings of "learned men" that only YHWH could redeem mankind are rendered null and void by the clear voice of Elohim Himself speaking through Scripture: a **man** had to do the job. Not just *any* man, but a *sinless* man, a man born of a virgin - THE MAN, Yeshua, now The Man exalted to the position of "Master" at YHWH's right hand.

The crux of the Christian faith is not a mythical and mystical "incarnation" by which YHWH supposedly became a man, but the historical event of a purely righteous man's death on a tree, and then his being raised from the dead by YHWH to everlasting life. It is this simple but powerful truth that began to be exchanged for a "mystery."

Creation, Not Incarnation

Yeshua makes clear reference to two distinct categories in John 3:6 when he says that "the flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." Yeshua clearly declared Elohim to be "spirit" (John 4:24). Note that he did not say, "I am spirit," or "Elohim is flesh" or even "The Father is spirit." By thus placing "Elohim" in the category of "spirit," when he himself is clearly a man of flesh and blood, Yeshua effectively excluded any possibility that he was YHWH. If Elohim, being spirit, can incarnate Himself as a man, then the clear scriptural distinction between flesh and spirit disintegrates. But YHWH the Creator, who is spirit, can *create* flesh, as He did in Genesis 1. His spirit brooded upon the face of the water, speaking into being things that had not existed before. These

things were in “the flesh,” but were not He. They were His creation, but He stood apart from them and judged them to be very good.

Creation is the means by which YHWH has brought things to pass outside of that which would occur naturally. He caused a human life to begin in the womb of Mary by an act of supernatural creation, not mystical incarnation (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). He waited for a willing woman to bear this child, a woman whose confession and testimony were befitting the honor bestowed upon her. In this way He brought into the world a human being who fulfilled the necessary conditions for becoming the Messiah. That was only the first hurdle. Then He had to work with the growing child to help him maintain his sinless condition until the time he could be anointed with the Set-apart Spirit and thus be empowered to do the work to which he was called (Acts 10:38). Yes, YHWH had to provide (by creation) the body that could be sacrificed, but Yeshua had to obey Him flawlessly for his body to finally be the perfect sacrifice that it needed to be. Thus, YHWH and Yeshua each had a responsibility that the other could not perform, and upon which our redemption depended.

[How Yeshua could be truthful in every way, sinless, and perfectly obedient need not be discussed here. But the explanation is not that the Set-apart Spirit made a unique human being by making a woman pregnant. Editor.]

Let us reiterate a point we have already made in the first two chapters: the assertion that “Yeshua was YHWH” in human flesh nullifies the absolute necessity of the Messiah’s obedience, because, as YHWH, no temptation he faced would have been genuine. YHWH cannot be tempted, because YHWH cannot sin (James 1:13). It is also axiomatic that YHWH can neither “obey” nor “disobey” Himself. Nor does He need to command Himself to do *anything*, for as YHWH, the perfect moral being, He *always* acts in a timely and perfectly righteous manner.

Another unsolvable problem caused by the “incarnation” is that it destroys the plan that Elohim established of a first Adam and a last Adam. Romans 5:12-19 clearly defines a critical, logical parallel between Adam and Yeshua Messiah in the context of the redemption of mankind. A major consequence of the doctrine that Elohim became man is that it destroys this key parallel, for Adam is hardly comparable to an eternally pre-existent being. Rather, he was a created being made in the image of the One who created him. Adam was not “fully man and fully Elohim,” “100 percent man and 100 percent Elohim,” “coequal with Elohim the Father,” or “of the same substance as the Father.” Adam was a created, empowered being who chose to disobey a direct command of YHWH, with dire consequences to himself and all mankind as a result.

Yeshua Messiah was also a created being, made a man in the same way that Adam was originally made, that is, a masterpiece of YHWH’s creation, given dominion over Paradise and every creature He had made. Yeshua could have no intrinsic advantage over Adam, or his qualification as Redeemer would be legally nullified. He was the Last Adam, not the first *Elohim-man*. The differences between Adam and Yeshua were circumstantial, not essential: Adam started tall with no navel; Yeshua started short with a

navel. Adam was created fully formed and fully able to comprehend the voice of YHWH. Yeshua had to learn from his parents. Adam did not have to suffer the indignity of a humble birth and be considered illegitimate, the son of common folk. Adam had only to dress and keep the garden and care for his wife. He had to keep from eating the fruit, or die and bring death to all his descendants. Yeshua had to drink the cup of suffering and die so he could be raised to conquer death and make it possible for others to eat of the “fruit” of eternal life.

In a head-to-“Head” comparison, Adam had every advantage, yet Yeshua overcame where Adam fell. Yeshua chose to obey God’s will, which was that he present himself as a perfect [man]. For the legal requirements of redemption to be satisfied, whatever Adam was, the Messiah had to be. Scripture declares very clearly that Yeshua was a created human being like Adam was. In fact, they were both the result of the Almighty’s direct creative activity.

Other Problems with the Doctrine of the “Incarnation”

Aside from its mythological character, what are other problems with the idea of YHWH becoming a man? First of all, it is illogical and self-contradictory when we are true to the accurate biblical usages of words. The Scriptures explicitly states that “Elohim is not a man,” (Num. 23:19), which defines two distinct categories, Elohim and man. In terms of symbolic logic, it could be stated in this way: P is not Q. If Q, then not P. If YHWH is not a man, then if someone is a “man,” he cannot be “YHWH.”

YHWH’s holiness precludes Him from becoming anything other than what He is. Rubenstein points out the illogic of the assertion that “YHWH can do anything.”

Athanasius [a bishop of Alexandria who spearheaded what became the orthodox Trinitarian position] says that God can do anything He chooses to do, and that He chose to turn Himself into a man for the sake of our salvation. Jesus Christ is not one of God’s creatures, he insists, but God Himself, incarnated in human form. These sound like clear statements, but, actually, they are hopelessly confused.

Can God do anything He chooses to do? Of course—except those things that are inconsistent with being God. Can He choose to be evil or ignorant? Could He be the Devil—or nothing at all?

Perfection cannot be improved upon or changed. He is not a pantheistic “elohim” who dwells in everything. He is “Set-apart,” meaning that He stands apart from and above His creation, yet is intimately involved with it. Therefore, YHWH cannot alter His essential nature, which by definition is perfect, and perfection cannot be improved upon. But even if He could, in doing so He would, by definition, no longer be “YHWH.”

If Yeshua Messiah is “YHWH in human flesh,” there are other scriptural casualties. First, it renders the pathos of Gethsemane virtually meaningless, when Yeshua prayed three times for “this cup to be removed from me” (Luke 22:42). If he is “of the same substance” as the Father, and an eternally integral part of a “Trinity” then his will is of

necessity the same as the Father's. If he struggled only in his "human side," as Trinitarians argue, while accepting the assignment in his "Elohim side," we are certainly left unimpressed by the difficulty he faced, compared to the way we face temptation without the benefit of an "Elohim" side that is sure to dominate.

If it were "YHWH's" will that Yeshua should die, and Yeshua is "YHWH" in human flesh, then it was clearly also his will to die. Why then did Jesus wrestle so intensely with the assignment to sacrifice himself, finally surrendering and saying "...**nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done**"? If this struggle were between his Elohim and human natures, then why invoke YHWH his Father in prayer in what was really an internal, almost schizophrenic, struggle?

In our considered opinion, attempting to artificially exalt the Messiah via theological manipulation results in the complete negation of the heroic character of this free act of his will. Unless he was really a man, "in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4:15 - *KJV*), with real freedom to turn his back on the assignment, the value of his act as a magnanimous sacrifice (an emptying of his own will and desire) is virtually eliminated. If he were *YHWH*, he could hardly deny himself or disobey his own directive. Seeing Yeshua as an empowered human being who had to obey YHWH like we do is the proper context and backdrop for appreciating his heroism. Seeing him as essentially YHWH, endowed with a divine perspective of human events, results in a view that he was only going through the prearranged motions. In that case, his heroic commitment and example collide with his supposed "deity" and sink into a gray and uninspiring sea of inevitability.

Along with the demise of the Messiah's heroism is the destruction of the logic of Philippians 2:8-11, and a diminishing of his exaltation based upon the merits of his obedience. Scripture here reveals that Elohim highly exalted Yeshua Messiah *in response to* his humbling himself to be obedient unto death, even a death as humiliating and painful as impalement. If the Messiah were "coeternal" and "pre-existent" with "Elohim the Father," and if he already occupied the highest position in glory before the "incarnation," then what is the significance of *this* special exaltation relative to his obedience unto death? Was he not simply returning to his former elevated station, one that could hardly be denied him since he willingly gave it up with the understanding that he would be able to return to it? If we are truly concerned about giving the Messiah his proper due and honoring him appropriately, does it not make more sense to place his accomplishments in a theological framework in which his heroism is *more* apparent rather than *less*? Consider the power of James Moffatt's translation of Isaiah 9:6 in this regard:

For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; the royal dignity he wears, and this the title that he bears - A wonder of a counselor, **a divine hero**, a father for all time, a peaceful prince!" **Isaiah 9:6.**

Yet another casualty of the "Incarnation" is the significance of his "Lordship." Acts 2:36 says that Elohim made Yeshua of Nazareth "both Master and Messiah." If Yeshua Messiah were already "YHWH," then one cannot comprehend the granting of the title

“Master” to him as anything particularly notable, because he already had every right to the title and had already been exercising it since creation. Again we find that manmade theological attempts to exalt the Messiah beyond what is specifically revealed in *Scripture* result in a radical demeaning of the value of his obedience and accomplishments on our behalf. Man, however sincerely, cannot add to Yeshua’s greatness by making him something that Scripture does not. In fact, any attempt to do so significantly subtracts from the greatness of the scriptural message. When we let the Word of Elohim speak for itself and allow every piece of the puzzle to fit together without squeezing it to fit our own traditions or preconceived notions, both YHWH and His Son are glorified, reason is satisfied and the “church” is blessed as it builds upon a sound cornerstone.

The “Pre-existence” of the Messiah

As Shaul prophesied, myths began to replace the clear and simple assertions of Scripture. One of the myths that arose was that Yeshua Messiah existed prior to his birth. This idea led to the necessity of the doctrine of the Incarnation, which attempts to explain how YHWH became a human. In his thorough examination of the doctrine of the Incarnation, James D. G. Dunn recognizes that the concept arose late in the first century through a mistakenly literal interpretation of the Good News of John. Dunn devotes many hundreds of pages to documenting that the doctrine of pre-existence can be substantiated only from John:

Only in the Fourth Gospel does the understanding of a personal pre-existence fully emerge, of Jesus as the divine Son of God before the world began, sent into the world by the Father... at the end of the first century a clear concept of pre-existent divine sonship has emerged, to become the dominant (and often the only) emphasis in subsequent centuries.

Other verses in the Messianic scriptures have been used from time to time to attempt to establish the doctrine of pre-existence, but many scholars have concluded that neither Shaul nor Peter nor James nor the Synoptics portray Yeshua as a pre-existent being.

Without the idea of the Messiah existing in some form before his birth, there would be no need for the doctrine of an “incarnation.” There have been many non-Trinitarians through the ages who have openly stood against the Trinity but who have believed that Yeshua was the first of all of YHWH’s creation and was the being through whom YHWH created the world. Apparently Arius, the bishop who debated with Athanasius at the Counsel of Nicaea in 325 AD, held this position. In examining the Good News of John, Chapter 6, we freely admit that there are verses in Scripture that seem to say that Yeshua actually existed prior to his birth. However, there is a greater weight of evidence against such an incongruous notion (can one exist before he exists?), and the verses that seem to say he did “pre-exist” can be understood in a way that does not support such a counterintuitive notion. Furthermore, the few “pre-existence” verses are outnumbered by many clear verses that teach that Yeshua began his life as a seed in the womb of Mary.

The first place the Messiah is mentioned is in the Pentateuch, and there is no statement that Yeshua was already alive in any form. On the contrary, countless references to the Messiah speak of him in the literal future tense. For example, “I **will** raise up for them a prophet” (Deut. 18:18), is typical in speaking of the Messiah in a future tense. Another example is in Samuel: “I **will** raise up your offspring...I **will be** his father, and he **will be** my son” (2 Sam. 7:12 and 14). Trinitarians say that the Messiah was “Elohim the Son,” the second person of the Trinity, who was “co-eternal” (*i.e.*, never created). In that case he would “already” have been the Son, and the use of the future tense is misleading, even inaccurate. Another example is: “His name **will be** called Wonderful Counselor” (Isa. 9:6 - *NASB*). The phrase “will be called” shows clearly that the people did not think the Messiah was already around. If the Messiah were already alive, he would have already had a name. There are theologians who believe that Yeshua appeared in the the ancient days, but there is no place where the text says that “Yeshua” appeared. Elohim and angels came into concretion for people, but never Yeshua, for he did not yet exist.

If Yeshua did “pre-exist,” then the only way that he could become a baby would be to “incarnate.” Thus, the fact that the Scripture does not mention any such “incarnation” is a good argument that it never actually occurred. This is made even more apparent when the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke are read, because they clearly indicate that Yeshua’s life began when Elohim impregnated Mary. For example, the wording of Matthew 1:18 is specific. Most translations read something like: “This is how the birth of Yeshua came to be....” The Greek word translated “birth” is *genesis*, which technically means “beginning,” and is translated “birth” only when the context demands it. It was apparent that the early copyists were unhappy that the Scriptures said “the beginning of Yeshua Messiah,” so in many Greek texts they changed “*genesis*,” “beginning,” to the closely related word, “*gennesis*,” which definitely means “birth.” Thankfully, there are honest people doing textual work today and it is openly admitted, even by Trinitarians, that the original word used in Matthew was *genesis* (“beginning”)

[Editor: Again, Yeshua was born by natural means as the son of Joseph and Mary.]

As Peter declared by revelation, “For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you” (1 Pet. 1:20 - *NASB*). The Messiah was in YHWH’s *foreknowledge* before the world began, but was not yet a reality. Christians are spoken of in exactly the same way. Romans 8:29 says Christians were foreknown. Ephesians 1:4 says Christians were chosen before the foundation of the world. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says Christians were chosen from the “beginning.” 2 Timothy 1:9 (*NASB*) says the grace of Elohim was granted us from all eternity. Yet no theologians say that Christians “pre-existed,” so it is inconsistent of them to take the same wording about both Messiah and Christians and arrive at two different conclusions - that the Messiah “pre-existed,” but Christians were only “foreknown.”

Angel Christology

Many Trinitarian theologians elevate the “high Christology” of the Good News of John and proceed to read into the writings of the apostle Shaul that he understood the Messiah to be some form of pre-existent, angelic being. But even before Yeshua was born, some Jewish rabbis and authors were identifying Elohim’s Messiah as an angelic being. For example, the Jewish scholars who translated the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, identified the Messiah as an angelic being in Isaiah 9:6.

The widely held and deeply rooted belief that the Messiah was a created being was a major obstacle that had to be overcome in order for the Trinity to be accepted by most Christians. In the first place, it is a clear tenet of Scripture that, born as a baby, Yeshua *became* the exalted Messiah with a new body and *acquired* the position of “Master” that the Word says he earned by virtue of his obedience to YHWH. It was quite inconceivable to the Jews and early Christians that the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, could undergo growth and change, because the Scriptures clearly testify that YHWH is perfect and does not change (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). Thus, the fact that the Messiah did grow and change presupposed that he was not YHWH, but a creation of YHWH (Luke 2:52). No wonder centuries of theological debate were required before the Trinity was accepted in the Church! Not only was it non-scriptural, but it flew in the face of another ancient myth that we have been discussing, Jewish Angel - Christology. The doctrine of the Trinity was not accepted immediately, but had to gain ascendancy by replacing the beliefs already in existence.

The battle for the ascendancy of Trinitarian doctrine was fought on many fronts, and the weapons included excommunication and the sword. Doctrinally, the battle raged fiercely. There were many questions that Trinitarians had to either answer or sidestep, and the path was a winding one with many detours. It is not within the scope of this book to cover the whole matter in depth in order to show all that was going on theologically in the early centuries in the Church, but these facts are available to learn from many objective historical sources.

The essence of the Good News, that Elohim “made” the man Yeshua “both Master and Messiah” (Acts 2:36), had to be downplayed, even done away with. If the Messiah were Elohim in eternity past, and if he were Elohim in the flesh, then it was hardly a “promotion” or “honor” for him to be “made Master.” He was simply returning to the position he occupied previous to his earthly “incarnation” after his guest appearance here on the earth.

To change from the original scriptural understanding that Yeshua *became* “both Master and Messiah,” to the new doctrine of what is actually “Elohim regaining His rightful position as Elohim,” yet another new doctrine had to be developed. This was the doctrine of the “two natures in the Messiah,” which is commonly understood as the Messiah being both “100 percent man and 100 percent Elohim.” This new idea of the

two natures in the Messiah also had to overcome obstacles, and it did. Martin Werner writes:

But the notion of a transformation [that Jesus went from a baby to “Lord”] had been too clearly set forth by Paul and the Synoptics to allow its being completely disregarded. Accordingly, the Church in its theology made a concession to the transformation-scheme when once the Angel-Christology had been definitively repudiated. This took the form of the notion that the “human nature,” with which that divine nature had united itself in Jesus, had become deified through the Resurrection and Exaltation.

As we mentioned above, the Church began to accept and teach that only YHWH Himself could redeem mankind. If so, then it follows that an angelic being or a creation of YHWH could not do so. Let us again state emphatically and categorically that the teaching that the redemption of mankind had to be accomplished by YHWH and not by a man is grossly unscriptural. The Scriptures clearly teaches that the Redeemer had to be a true *man*, and not a hybrid “God-Man.”

Elohim Is the Source of the Messiah

There are a number of verses that refer to Yeshua coming “from heaven,” “from above,” “sent from Elohim,” *etc.*, and these are all found in the Good News of John. We explored some of the reasons for this language in the Fourth Good News in Chapter 8, but we will now address the issue further because of the way the Good News of John is used by Trinitarians to establish the doctrines of Pre-existence and Incarnation:

- No one has ascended into heaven, but he who descended from heaven: the Son of Man” (3:31 - *NASB*).
- He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all (3:31 - *NASB*).
- For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God (3:34 - *NASB*).
- For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world (6:33 - *NASB*).
- For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me (6:38 - *NASB*).
- What then if you should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? (6:62 - *NASB*).
- I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world (8:23).
- I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on my own initiative, but He sent me (8:42b - *NASB*).
- I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father (16:28 - *NASB*).

These verses may seem to be impressive proof that Yeshua did “pre-exist” in heaven before his birth, but in Chapter 8 we explained the purpose of such figurative language. Beyond that important truth, however, how would *the people to whom Yeshua was talking* understand his words? The Jews were not even expecting YHWH to impregnate a virgin in order to bring forth their Messiah, much less that YHWH Himself would mystically transform Himself into the Messiah. The concept of YHWH having such a direct relationship with a mortal woman was foreign to Jewish thinking. Mary, upon being told she would bear “the Son of the Most High,” said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34).

[Case in point: no Jew would ever have thought that the Almighty would impregnate a woman. Such a concept is entirely pagan. See what follows: Editor.]

A quick study of Jewish commentaries on the Hebrew Scripture verses that Christians use to show the virgin birth in prophecy will demonstrate that the Jews did not then, and do not now, interpret them to mean a virgin birth. That is one reason the Messiah was accused of being “illegitimate” (John 8:41). James Dunn, himself a believer in the doctrine of pre-existence, wrote in *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*: “We have examples of men who are said to be the offspring of a union between some god and mortal woman (Dionysus, Heracles, Alexander the Great), but this was foreign to Jewish thought, and Jewish writers seem to have avoided the conception completely.” Thus, the Jews would not have understood the Messiah saying that he “came from above” to mean that he was “incarnated.” How *would* they have understood him?

If studied in the language and culture in which they were spoken, words or phrases that seem to communicate one truth often communicate something else entirely. This is a common occurrence in verbal intercourse. James Dunn’s exhaustive study devoted to the origin of the doctrine of the “Incarnation” was motivated by a desire to understand the words of the Messianic Scriptures in their original context. He writes: “My concern has been all the time, so far as it is possible, *to let the New Testament* writers speak for themselves, to understand their words as they would have intended, to hear them as their first readers would have heard them...” Unfortunately, Dunn is not sensitive to idiomatic language and falls into the same trap many Trinitarian scholars do, that of taking figurative language literally, and literal language figuratively. Once again we see that the proper acknowledgment of figures of speech is absolutely crucial for sound biblical exegesis.

There is a common Hebrew and Aramaic idiom that when YHWH is the author of something, the Jews spoke of it as “coming from YHWH,” “coming from heaven,” “coming down from heaven,” *etc.* For example, the very prologue of John most often used to substantiate the doctrine of Incarnation says in verse 6: “There was a man sent from YHWH whose name was John.” Does this mean that John, too, was a pre-existent divine being who was sent from heaven and became a human by an “incarnation”? Clearly not, but he was “sent from YHWH” in the sense that he was commissioned by YHWH to perform an important function.

There are many other examples of this idiom. YHWH said in Malachi that He would “open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing,” and today we still use the words “Heaven sent” for a blessing that comes at just the right time. The Scriptures speaks of the “bread from heaven” referring to manna, but the manna did not float down like snow. Rather, it appeared like frost on the ground. It was said to “come down from heaven” because YHWH was its source. YHWH being the source is the best explanation for the Messiah’s statements that he was sent by YHWH, came from above, *etc.* The Jews would naturally have understood the Messiah’s statements that way, and there is no evidence at all that they would have expected the Messiah to be speaking of a literal descent from heaven or an “incarnation.”

In regard to the example of John the Baptist as a man “sent from Elohim,” consider the following verse:

Matthew 21:25

(Yeshua asked the Jews): “John’s baptism - where did it come from? Was it from heaven [*i.e.*, was Elohim its source?], or from men?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’”

John’s baptism was “from heaven” because Elohim was the source of the inspiration. So too, Yeshua “came from heaven” because Elohim was the source of the seed created in Mary. It would be an intrusion on the language and the culture of the times to insist that the Scriptures teaches an incarnation when there is evidence that the words used to “prove” it have an entirely different meaning. We will quote one final example that should suffice to make the point. James 1:17 says that good and perfect gifts are “from above” and “come down” from the Father. Obviously, this verse is saying that YHWH is the source of the wonderful things spoken of. No one believes that unless something literally drops from the sky it is not from YHWH.

The Prophetic Perfect

There is yet another Jewish idiomatic expression that factors into this equation, related to the other figures of speech (*prolepsis* and *heterosis*) that help us understand the Good News of John. When something was absolutely going to happen in the future, it is often spoken of as occurring in the past, or as already in existence. There are many examples of this in the Scriptures. This is very well known to Hebrew scholars, and it is called by different names including: “the prophetic perfect,” “the historic sense of prophecy,” “the preterite of prophetic vision,” *etc.* The distinguished scholar and author of *Young’s Concordance* wrote: “The past is frequently used to express the certainty of a future action.” Before Abraham had any descendants, Elohim said to him: “to your descendants I **have given** this land” (Gen. 15:18 - *NASB*). Jude 14 (*NASB*) speaks of Enoch’s prophesy, which literally reads “YHWH came with many thousands of His set-

apart ones.” Of course, YHWH had not yet come, but the event was so certain that it was placed in the past tense. There are many more examples of this in the Scriptures.

In his magnificent work, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, E. W. Bullinger showed that the switch from the literal future tense to the past tense for emphasis was technically the figure of speech heterosis, and we have already introduced the concept of heterosis in Chapter 8. As an introduction to the subject of the past being used instead of the future for a future event, Bullinger writes:

[The past tense is used instead of the future] when the speaker views the action as being as good as done. This is very common in the Divine prophetic utterances where, though the sense is literally future, it is regarded and spoken of as though it were already accomplished in the Divine purpose and determination. The figure is to show the absolute certainty of the things spoken of.

Some of the examples of the Hebrew text speaking of a future event in the past are:

Genesis 15:18. The Hebrew text reads, “to your descendants I **have given** this land.” However, this promise was made before Abraham even had any descendants to give the land to. Nevertheless, YHWH states His promise in the past tense to emphasize the certainty of the event. In order to avoid possible confusion, the *NIV* has, “to your descendants I **give** this land.”

1 Samuel 2:31. The Hebrew text is in the past tense and literally reads, about Eli the High Priest, “Lo, the days are coming, and I **have** cut off your arm [*i.e.*, “your strength”]. Almost all modern versions translate this verse in the future tense so it makes sense to the modern reader. The *NIV* has, “The time is coming when I **will** cut short your strength.”

1 Samuel 10:2. The Hebrew text is in the past tense and says, “you **have found** two men.” Most modern versions convert the past to the future so the reader is not confused. The *NIV* reads, “When you [Saul] leave me [Samuel] today, you **will meet** two men near Rachel’s tomb.”

Job 19:27 is one of the great statements of hope in the Scriptures. Job knew that sometime after he died he would be resurrected to life and be with the Messiah. The Hebrew text makes this future resurrection certain by portraying it as a past event. The Hebrew text literally reads, “my eyes **have** seen him [the Redeemer].” The *NIV* converts the past to the future so the reader will not be confused: “I myself **will** see him with my own eyes.”

Proverbs 11:7-21 offer an interesting contrast. In verse 7, the past tense of the Hebrew text makes the future destruction of the wicked person a sure thing, reading, “The hope of the unjust man **has** perished.” In contrast, in verse 21 the Hebrew text, speaking of the righteous man, reads, “the seed of the just **has** escaped.” Of course, the actual judgment of the righteous and wicked is still future, and most modern versions say that the hope of the wicked **will** perish while the seed of the just **will** escape. YHWH’s justice

for both the righteous and the wicked is assured, and the use of the idiom warns of that in a powerful way.

Isaiah 11:1 is a great prophecy about the coming Messiah. YHWH foretold the coming of the Messiah from the line of David. He used the prophetic perfect idiom and placed the prophecy of the coming Messiah in the past tense. The Hebrew text reads, "A shoot **has** come up from the stump of Jesse...." The modern versions use the future tense and read, "A shoot **will** come up from the stump of Jesse." The coming of the Messiah was absolutely certain, and YHWH represents that certainty in the text.

Isaiah 9:6 also speaks of the coming Messiah. To mark the certainty of the future event, the past tense is used in the Hebrew text. The Hebrew text of Isaiah 9:6 reads, "To us a child **has been** born, to us a son **has been** given, and the government **has been** on his shoulders, and he **has been** called Wonderful, Counselor..." Of course, the birth of the Messiah was future, and the noted commentator Edward J. Young writes:

We must note again how impressive this fact was to Isaiah. He speaks of the birth as though it had already occurred, even though from his standpoint it was future. We know that Isaiah is not speaking of a past occurrence, for the simple reason that to do so would not yield a good sense. Whose birth, prior to Isaiah time, ever accomplished what is herein described? To ask that question is to answer it. Furthermore, we must note that the Child whose birth is here mentioned was also the One whose birth had been foretold in chapter 7.

Jeremiah 21:9 speaks of the certainty that those people who surrender to the Babylonians will spare their life. The Hebrew text reads, "Whoever goes out and **has** surrendered...will live." Of course, no one had surrendered yet, and so the modern versions read, "Whoever goes out and surrenders...**will** live."

The idioms of the Hebrew culture come over into the Messianic texts as well. Bullinger explains that the idioms of the Hebrew language and culture are reflected in the Greek text. He writes:

The fact must ever be remembered that, while the language of the New Testament is Greek, the agents and instruments employed by the Holy Spirit were Hebrews. God spake "by the mouth of his holy prophets." Hence, while the "mouth" and the throat and vocal chord and breath were human, the *words* were Divine.

No one is able to understand the phenomenon; or explain how it comes to pass: for Inspiration is a fact to be believed and received, and not a matter to be reasoned about. While therefore, the *words* are Greek, the *thoughts* and *idioms* are Hebrew.

Some, on this account, have condemned the Greek of the New Testament, because it is not classical; while others, in their anxiety to defend it, have endeavored to find parallel usages in classical Greek authors. Both might have spared their pains by recognizing that the New Testament Greek abounds with *Hebraisms*, i.e., expressions conveying Hebrew usages and thoughts in Greek words."

We agree with Bullinger, and would like to add that there is also the possibility that there was an Aramaic original text underlying some of the Greek text and giving it a Semitic flavor. A Messianic Scripture example that Bullinger gives is Ephesians 2:6: "And Elohim

raised us up with the Messiah and **seated** us with him in the heavenly realms in Messiah Yeshua.” This verse is usually translated in modern versions just as it reads in the Greek - in the past tense. That causes a problem. In the rest of the Bible, the translators have almost always translated the “prophetic perfect” as a future tense so the reader will not be confused, so the average Christian is not used to seeing a future event described in the past tense. Thus when they read that Christians are “seated” in the heavenly realms, they have no training to help them understand that this is a way of stating that in the future we will absolutely be seated with the Messiah in the kingdom of heaven. Most of them try to “spiritualize” the verse and come up with some way we are seated in heaven now, even though that contradicts what both experience and the rest of the post-Messiah Scriptures say about us being on earth now.

Another clear example of the prophetic perfect in the Messianic Scriptures occurs in the book of Jude. Jude 14 speaks of Enoch’s prophecy, which literally reads, “YHWH **came** with ten thousands of His set-apart ones.” Of course, YHWH has not come yet, but His coming is so certain that it is placed in the past tense. It can easily be seen how idioms of the language like the “prophetic perfect” put translators in a tough position. If they translate the text literally, many Christians will be very confused. However, if they do not, then the powerful way that the Father communicates what will absolutely occur in the future is lost.

There are many important examples of the “prophetic perfect” in the Scriptures, and an exhaustive list would be very difficult to compile. However, the examples listed above should be enough to show that a future event may be spoken of in the past tense to show that it will absolutely come to pass. The fact that the past tense is used for a future event all through Scripture should be evidence that it was commonly understood. More than that, many of the examples above show the prophetic perfect being used by YHWH or a prophet as a speaker. Thus the fact that Yeshua would use it and say things like, “the esteem I had with you before the world began” only shows that Yeshua used the same language for future events that YHWH and other prophets used. Yeshua’s use of the past for a future event does not prove he lived in the past any more than Samuel’s use of the past for a future event proved that he lived in the past.

Conclusion

It should now be clear that the doctrine of the Incarnation is not scriptural and was developed by man, particularly in the third through fifth centuries in conjunction with the doctrines of the Trinity and the dual nature of the Messiah. Based upon this evidence, we propose that the idea of incarnation give way to a simpler and more scriptural explanation of Yeshua’s origin - that YHWH was his source by the same process of special creation that brought the heavens and the earth into being. We agree that it is important for Christians to believe in the virgin birth of Yeshua, because without that teaching, Yeshua is merely the offspring of Joseph and Mary, and tainted by the sin of mankind. If so, he would be incapable of being our Redeemer, because he could never

present himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins. In that case, Christianity would indeed fall apart. But nothing is lost if a shift is made in Christian thinking from Yeshua being the “incarnation” of YHWH to Yeshua being the *creation* of YHWH, his Father. How sad that the vast majority of Christians believe the fable that YHWH became a baby. The truth is nearly just the opposite - a *baby* became *the* Master and Messiah.

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Please note that the original paper is well footnoted and should be referred to for that purpose.

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“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” Deut. 4:6.